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## GOVERNING ANNOUNCES 2009 PUBLIC OFFICIALS OF THE YEAR

(WASHINGTON, D.C., November 2, 2009) — GOVERNING released the names of eight state and local government officials who are being honored for leadership and excellence as 2009 Public Officials of the Year. Now in its 16th year, the annual awards program recognizes leaders from state, city and county government who have made a notable positive impact on their department/agency, community or state.

“This year’s public officials have thrived in the face of remarkable challenges,” said GOVERNING Editor Alan Ehrenhalt. “Whether they were responding to a natural disaster, confronting a city’s economic decline or managing a disputed election, these eight leaders have displayed poise, wisdom and ingenuity. Today, with every government grappling with the effects of a prolonged recession, their examples prove that strong, smart leadership is possible in the most difficult of circumstances.”

GOVERNING’s 2009 Public Officials of the Year include:

- Maryland **Governor Martin O’Malley**, who brought no-nonsense, statistics-based performance measurement to his state, producing a better-informed, better-managed government.
- **Steve Jennings**, the chief information officer of Harris County, Texas, who collaborated with other Houston-area jurisdictions to create a top-notch interoperable communications system that proved invaluable when Hurricane Rita struck in 2005.
- **Crit Luallen**, Kentucky’s auditor of public accounts, who has successfully fought corruption and fiscal mismanagement, the capstone to her 35-year career as a versatile problem-solver in state government.
- Youngstown, Ohio Mayor **Jay Williams**, who acknowledged the hard truth of lasting population decline in his city, then formulated an aggressive plan to create a Youngstown that will be smaller, but better.
- **Pete Rahn**, director of the Missouri Department of Transportation, who partnered with the private sector in unique ways to build large-scale transportation projects quickly and affordably.
- Washington Secretary of State **Sam Reed**, who exuded fairness in managing a disputed gubernatorial election in 2004, then reformed the administration of elections in his state.
- **Phyllis Kahn**, a Minnesota state representative, who has been a force in state government for more than 35 years, passing landmark legislation on air pollution, computer crime and women’s rights.

- **Steve Hewitt**, the city administrator of Greensburg, Kansas, who oversaw the speedy, environmentally-friendly rebuilding of his city after a devastating tornado from which many thought it would never recover.

“It isn’t often that public officials from our states, cities and counties are nationally recognized for their extraordinary contributions to good governance,” said Peter A Harkness, founder and publisher emeritus of GOVERNING. “For the sixteenth year, we celebrate another eight individuals—elected, appointed and career—who have made extraordinary achievements to improve the public effort in their states and communities. The 2009 winners become part of a tradition of excellence and service. We applaud them and their continued dedication to serving the public sector.”

Public Officials of the Year are selected from nominations submitted by readers, experts in the public and private sectors and the GOVERNING editorial team. Among the qualities recognized are leadership, courage, innovation, creativity and good management. Award winners are profiled in the November issue of the magazine and on GOVERNING.com. They will also be honored at a dinner at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, D.C. on November 19. The event is hosted by GOVERNING and sponsored by CGI, Northrop Grumman and Oracle.

For more information about this year’s honorees, visit [www.GOVERNING.com/POY](http://www.GOVERNING.com/POY).

#### **About GOVERNING**

GOVERNING connects America’s leaders by providing intelligence and analysis on management, policy and politics to help guide and inspire innovative leaders across state and local government. Our audience—online, in print and in-person— includes governors, mayors, legislators, local council members, program directors, agency heads, CIOs, policy advisors and other senior governmental officials. GOVERNING remains dedicated to creating products and environments that allow leaders from across geographic and institutional boundaries to share ideas, identify best practices and avoid pitfalls. In addition, we provide insights on the state and local experience to broader audiences of interest, including those in the federal government, national politics, the private sector and the media. [www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com)

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